

ORIGINAL  
STAMPED IN RED

**RESOLUTION NO.: R-2021-046**

*Authorizing a Public Hearing for the Improvement Plan for the City Center Improvement District*

WHEREAS, pursuant to South Carolina Code §5-37-10, et seq., municipalities are authorized to create municipal improvement districts; and,

WHEREAS, it is proposed that Columbia City Council create a Municipal Improvement District for the area described in the within referenced Improvement Plan, generally bounded as follows:

The Western boundary is: the western property line of property on the West side of Assembly Street from Elmwood Avenue to Gervais Street.

The Northern boundary is: the northern property line of property on the South side of Elmwood Avenue from Assembly Street to Marion Street.

The Eastern boundary is: the eastern property line of property on the East side of Marion Street from Elmwood Avenue to Gervais Street.

The Southern boundary is: the southern property line of property on the North side of Gervais Street from Assembly Street to Marion Street.


WHEREAS, it is the desire of Columbia City Council to receive public comments thereon; and,

WHEREAS, South Carolina Code §5-37-50 requires that certain resolutions be adopted and that a public hearing be held on the question of the creation of such a district; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and City Council of the City of Columbia, South Carolina this 18th day of May, 2021, that the attached "Improvement Plan for the City Center Improvement District Revised March 5, 2021 (the "Improvement Plan) be and it is incorporated herein by reference and this Improvement Plan shall form the basis for a public hearing to be held before Columbia City Council on Tuesday, June 15, 2021 at 2:00 p.m. using Video Conferencing Technology. The Virtual Meeting will be streamed online at [www.columbiasc.gov](http://www.columbiasc.gov). Citizens have the ability to listen to audio and participate in the meeting via telephone by dialing 1-855-925-2801. When prompted, enter meeting code: 9978. For additional meeting information visit [www.columbiacitysc.igm2.com](http://www.columbiacitysc.igm2.com). You may also register at this site to post comments related to items on the agenda. For questions regarding the meeting portal, please contact the City Clerk at (803)545-3045 or [cityclerk@columbiasc.gov](mailto:cityclerk@columbiasc.gov).

Requested by:

City Manager \_\_\_\_\_


  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

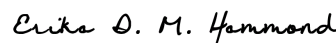
Approved by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Manager

Approved as to form:

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Attorney  
Introduced: 5/18/2021  
Final Reading: 5/18/2021

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

**Improvement Plan  
City Center  
Business Improvement District  
Columbia, SC**

*Prepared pursuant to the State of South Carolina  
Municipal Improvement Act  
To reauthorize an improvement district in  
Downtown Columbia*

FINAL 2021

REVISED MARCH 5, 2021

**Improvement Plan**  
City Center Improvement District  
Columbia, South Carolina

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**Exhibit One**

**BID Map**

## **Section 1**

### **Why Reauthorize a Business Improvement District for Downtown Columbia?**

Since the establishment of Columbia's downtown Business Improvement District (aka the Main Street District or MSD) 20 years ago, countless property owners, businesses, individuals, and city leaders have worked on the revitalization of downtown and particularly - South Carolina's Main Street. Main Street and the downtown core are the heart of our community and should reflect everything that is positive and good about Columbia. The image of Columbia, as in most other cities, is reflected by strong development in our city's core pushing strong development into the region. Our Main Street is important, it is the heart of our city – the State Capital of South Carolina. Why would we accept anything less than a great Main Street? To continue to attract new investment and to protect and maintain the existing investment Downtown, property owners are proposing to continue assessing themselves to maintain the City Center Business Improvement District, a private sector, self-help improvement district established under the South Carolina Municipal Improvements Act.

This would be the third renewal and the second 10-year reauthorization of the City Center BID which was first established in 2001 and is managed by the non-profit City Center Partnership. The success of the BID since the first 10 year renewal beginning on Jan. 1, 2012, warrants another 10-year term for the BID. Since that plan was approved, Columbia's City Center has seen significant growth and even with the hardships imposed by the coronavirus pandemic beginning in early 2020 and continuing growth has continued. Over the past 10 years, the City and the BID working together have made Main Street and downtown a destination.

The City Center Partnership is thankful for and values its supportive relationship with city government and with other organizations. We hope we can continue to work together to accomplish our goals and strengthen the City Center and beyond.

#### **Summary of growth over 10 years**

Promoting density downtown pays off. As of 2019, the taxable density of the Main Street District was \$2,091,097 per acre, exceeding by 3 times that value per acre of Five Points at \$598,276 and nearly 10 times that of The Vista at \$284,131.

Since the 2011 BID renewal, downtown has seen major commercial, retail and residential investment.

A few of those investments include: Mast General Store opened in the renovated Lourie's building in 2011; AgFirst purchased the Bank of America Plaza in 2012 and moved its operations and some 475 employees into the building; in 2013, the Columbia Marriott completed a \$12 million renovation project; in 2015 the Nickelodeon Theatre completed its second-floor renovation; and in 2019 the 1321 Lofts on Lady Street. The 130 apartments in a converted 1940s office building is the latest project by downtown residential pioneer Tom Prioreshi.

Since the opening of Mast in 2011, which Mast officials have noted would not have come to Main Street without the presence of the City Center Partnership, and the renovation of the Nickelodeon Theater, the 1600 block of Main Street has seen a complete makeover and transformation into a major entertainment destination, much of it spearheaded by Scott Middleton, who first moved his healthcare businesses from West Columbia to Main Street in 2014. Seeing the value in the Main Street District and the potential to create a new downtown entertainment district, the Middleton family has acquired multiple properties in the 1600 block and his businesses now include Good Life Café, The Grand on Main, and The Main Course. Middleton's latest Main Street venture Smoked -- an oyster bar, barbecue restaurant and microbrewery -- is set to open later in 2021 in three renovated spaces in the 1600 block. Many of his original healthcare businesses are moving to properties Middleton has acquired in the 1700 block. He also owns other properties in the MSD.

The 1600 block has also seen the opening of the Mad Monkey office (located in the historic Habernicht Building), Lula Drake Wine Parlour, Hendrix restaurant and The Woody on Main, a former Vista bar. Hendrix and The Woody occupy a historic building that once housed the popular Hennessy's restaurant.

Entertainment destinations have also been established in the 1700 block with The Joint@1700 Main, a jazz and tapas bar in the turn of the century Walker building; The Transmission Arcade at 1712 Main St.; and Mom's on Main Bistro and Bar at 1734 Main St.

Other redevelopment has included the purchase and renovation of the historic Equitable Arcade at Main and Washington streets by developer Ron Swinson. The building is now home to several new businesses, including Indah Coffee, Ophidian Tattoo, Odd Bird Books, Stoner's Pizza Joint, and Ally & Eloise bakeshop.

A strong sign of Main Street's vitality has been that as retail and commercial space in the Main Street District has become vacant, those vacancies have not lasted long. The popular Zoe's Kitchen in The Meridian building closed in August of 2018 after six years and was replaced in late 2019 by Market on Main which has created one of Main Street's most popular outdoor venues, especially in the age of COVID-19. When the Blue Flour Bakery's Main Street location closed in September 2020, a victim of the pandemic, the space was almost immediately acquired by Bourbon restaurant next door for an expansion. Similarly, when The Oak Table closed in the building at 1221 Main St. in 2018, the space was taken over by the critically acclaimed Hall's Chophouse.

Other businesses have simply changed hands, like Uptown Gifts on Main, attesting to the continuing interest in the Main Street District.

City Center Partnership initiated an action to have portions of the MSD buildings placed on the list of The National Register of Historic Places. In a collaboration

with Historic Columbia and a grant from the Richland County Conservation Commission, the initiative has resulted in spurring growth through the reuse of existing, historic buildings.

Despite the negative impact of the coronavirus pandemic, the downtown Columbia market has seen decreasing numbers of empty offices and storefronts. While the pandemic caused soaring vacancies in many cities, Colliers International reports that in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2020, Columbia's Central Business District actually saw a decrease in the vacancy rate for office space from 9.43% in the third quarter to 9.26% in the fourth quarter. Much of that decline was attributed to absorption of Class B space, which means the renovation of older space.

As Main Street proper has seen significant revitalization, that renaissance has begun to accelerate outward, especially in the last few years with the opening of Hotel Trundle in 2018, a \$10-million adaptive reuse project at 1224 Taylor St. in three historic commercial buildings dating to the early 1900s; The Boudreaux Group, architects renovation and occupancy of the Powell Furniture building at 1519 Sumter St.; and Lexington Hospitality group's renovation of a 10-story office building at 1233 Washington St. into a Holiday Inn.

More development, especially in the hospitality sector, is on tap with plans for the Armory Hotel, a 34-room boutique-style project announced for the historic S.C. National Guard Armory at 1219 Assembly St.

The 2019 Hospitality Tax generated for the Main Street District was \$3,417 per acre, considerably more than the \$2,010 per acre of the much larger Vista District and eclipsed only by Five Points. That figure is certain to increase with the opening of new hospitality businesses. In previous years, the Hospitality Tax has been a significant source of funding for the City Center Partnership and the Main Street District. As the district's hospitality industry continues to grow that funding will be even more important as the City Center Partnership works to bring even more visitors to the city. As early as 2003 the City Center Partnership received \$56,500 in Hospitality Tax funds. The amount of Hospitality Tax funds received increased for many years as Hospitality Tax revenues increased. But in recent years the city has decided to reallocate much of those funds for other purposes, and the CCP has stopped receiving Hospitality Tax funds. The City Center Partnership hopes to receive Hospitality Tax funding again in the future as it provides extra support for our Clean and Safe and Marketing efforts.

Not only has downtown seen significant commercial and retail growth, but the Main Street District's residential growth has been and continues to be especially strong. In 2011, approximately 550 people lived in the district in six residential properties. By 2019 that number had tripled to nearly 1,700 people and 10 residential properties.

And residential growth continues unabated even in the face of the coronavirus pandemic. At present 5 new residential projects are either under way or planned for the Main Street District, including:

- 1) 1813 Main Street – Adaptive reuse and conversion of an office building by Cason Development Group to 30 market-rate apartments. This is the first residential project in the 1800 block.
- 2) Laurel & Assembly Streets -- Adaptive reuse of the Veterans Administration building by international developer and investor Justin Etzin to create an 88-unit luxury apartment complex. Situated overlooking Finlay Park, these units will have a spectacular view of the city.
- 3) Assembly & Washington Streets -- The Edge, a 17-story, 670-bed student housing tower by Chicago-based CRG Real Estate.
- 4) Lady & Assembly Streets -- the Palms on Lady, an 88-unit luxury residential tower by developer Ben Arnold. The Veterans Administration building reuse, The Palms and The Edge are the first residences along Assembly Street north of Gervais.
- 5) 1310 Lady Street – The Lady is a 109-unit apartment complex by Columbia-based Styx Co. This adaptive reuse project spans three historic buildings at Sumter and Lady streets.

Much of this development would not have happened without the efforts of the City Center Partnership working with pioneering downtown residential developers and other partners, in addition to creating a safer and more livable downtown through programs such as Clean and Safe. The amount of residential development and the large number of students who now live in the Main Street District --- some 800 alone in the Hub -- as well as other new residents have brought a diversity and a 24/7 vibrancy to downtown that it did not have before. The diversity and vibrancy of downtown will continue to be enhanced moving forward as new residential properties are added to the Main Street District.

The past 10 years have also seen an emphasis in the Main Street District on the development of public spaces, such as the renovation of Boyd Plaza at the Columbia Museum of Art, and an explosion of popular cultural and entertainment options, such as the Soda City Market, First Thursday and the many street festivals and spectacular events like the Famously Hot New Year. These kinds of amenities, many developed and hosted with the assistance of the City Center Partnership improve livability and have proven an extremely popular draw for downtown. The City Center Partnership has made downtown fun again.

While the coronavirus pandemic has posed problems for downtowns across the country, the end of the pandemic will pose tremendous opportunity to downtowns, like Columbia, that are well positioned to take advantage.

Business Improvement District Property owners have several reasons for seeking a third renewal and second 10-year term for the district.

## **1. To Provide Consistent Funding to Continue to Improve Both the Health and Safety of Downtown.**

Downtown Columbia is now discernably safer, more secure and cleaner than it was a decade ago. Much of the change in downtown Columbia is due directly to the efforts of the City Center Partnership. Acting on the No. 1 issue to downtown property owners – homelessness – the City Center Partnership through its Clean and Safe Ambassadors, familiarly known as the Yellow Shirts, has significantly decreased the negative impact of homelessness on downtown. In 2020, the Yellow Shirts reported handling 428 contacts related to homelessness and panhandling, dramatically fewer than the 2,298 just five years earlier in 2015. The number of outreach contacts with the homeless in downtown also dropped dramatically over the same five years from 1,539 in 2015 to just 69 in 2020.

The pandemic has also brought an emphasis on creating a healthier downtown, and as a result the Yellow Shirts now and for the foreseeable future sanitize every trash can, door handle, café table seat and magazine rack multiple times a day, 7 days a week.

Downtown Columbia must continue to compete for investors, customers and visitors with clean, safe, healthy and attractive areas. Continued enhanced security, maintenance and cleaning programs will further address both the reality and perception of Downtown as a safe and healthy place and to live, work, play, and worship, and to own a business.

## **2. An Opportunity to Strengthen Private Sector Management and Accountability in Downtown**

The district will continue to be managed by the non-profit, private sector corporation known as the City Center Partnership. District work plans and budgets, based on this 10-year plan, will be refined annually by a board of directors, representative of the property owners who are paying the assessment with direct accountability to those who are paying into the district. Services provided by the district will be subject to private sector performance standards and controls including annual audits where no findings have occurred in almost 20 years of operations.

## **3. The Need to be Proactive in Determining the Future of Downtown**

In order to protect their investment, property owners must be a partner in the process that determines how new development projects are implemented. Property owners in Columbia and in other cities —such as Atlanta, Nashville, Raleigh, Roanoke, Birmingham and Charlotte -- have been successful at leading and shaping future downtown developments through strong Business Improvement Districts. A BID in Columbia provides the financial resources, professional staff and private sector management to ensure that the challenges faced by Downtown will be proactively addressed.

## **4. The Need to Continue to Attract New Business and Investment**



Downtown Columbia competes with suburban shopping centers and office parks in the region, as well as against managed downtown areas in other states for tenants, visitors and investors. The City Center Partnership has proven itself a valuable asset in helping to attract new business and investment to the Central Business District. There is currently more than \$200 million of construction taking place in the Main Street District.

While the growth and investment in downtown over the last 10 years has been nothing short of spectacular, the next 10 years will present unique challenges as Columbia emerges from the shadow of the worldwide coronavirus pandemic.

Columbia's Main Street District has not only weathered the pandemic but also has seen continued growth. Downtown is well positioned to capitalize on new opportunities. Prior to the pandemic, smaller cities, like Columbia, were already becoming attractive to the country's youngest adults reacting to skyrocketing rents in large urban areas, and now changes in the labor market. The "I can work from anywhere" phenomenon has accelerated that shift.

If Downtown is to continue to remain competitive and viable as an alternative location, it must pursue its own well-financed, proactive strategy to retain business and tenants as well as to attract new business and investment. A Business Improvement District provides the financial resources to develop and implement a Downtown focused economic development strategy to reduce building vacancies and attract new business. This return on investment is quite significant.

The City Center Partnership remains well positioned to continue as a convener for agencies involved in economic development in the central business district, as well as to serve as a resource for the creation of a focused economic development strategy. CCP can help facilitate city-funded programs to improve the appearance of downtown and attract and retain businesses, such as a Façade Improvement Program. CCP also will continue to implement its highly successful retail recruitment program, which has brought numerous new retailers to the Main Street District since 2011, such as Mast General Store, Miss Cocky, The Shoppes on Main, Something Special Florist & Gifts, and Odd Bird Books, as well as restaurants and new hotels.

Commercial, retail and residential development can be expected to boom on Assembly Street between Gervais and Elmwood and in the northern section of the BID over the next 10 years as the City solidifies and moves on redevelopment plans for the U.S. Post Office property at 1601 Assembly St. and the revitalization of the adjacent Finlay Park. The City Center Partnership is well positioned to enhance these efforts.

As growth continues to push beyond the BID's boundaries, the City Center Partnership will continue to seek opportunities to collaborate and to provide contract services to and work with other districts and organizations as we look toward the future. We also are open to expanding boundaries of the BID and the

responsibilities of the CCP if all parties desire that and it will move the community forward.

## Section 2

### What Is a Business Improvement District?

The International Downtown Association estimates about 4,000+ place management organizations globally with 2,500 in North America, also known as Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), Business Improvement Areas (BIAs), Partnerships and Alliances. Led by the private sector, they are typically nonprofits primarily supported by special assessments. BIDs exist in nearly every state. According to the IDA, each organization on average “provides \$1.2 million in services to their districts to help businesses thrive and to make the district a great place for workers, residents and visitors.” These enhanced improvements and activities such as security, maintenance and marketing, are **in addition** to those provided by local government.

A Property-Based Business Improvement District (BID) is based upon the “benefit assessment district” concept, which provides for an assessment on real property and improvements upon real property to be raised within a specific geographic district with the proceeds directed back to the district to provide **enhanced services** that benefit the district and properties located within the district boundaries.

BIDs allow for a wide range of service options, including security, maintenance, marketing, economic and housing development, special events, etc.

BIDs offer a number of unique advantages. They are:

- Designed and created by those who will pay the assessment
- Governed by those who pay through a property and business board that supervises operations and submits a yearly implementation plan.
- Implemented by those who pay ...through a non-profit, private sector, management organization.
- Established through the support of the property owners who will pay the proposed property assessments.
- Established for a predetermined number of years with a sunset clause that requires a new approval by those who pay to renew the BID

# **Section 3 City Center Improvement Plan Summary**

## **Improvement Plan Summary**

Developed by property owners in Downtown Columbia, the City Center Improvement District Plan improves and conveys special benefits to properties located within the boundaries of the BID. The City Center Improvement District provides new and enhanced improvements and activities including maintenance, public space cleaning and sanitizing, security, homeless outreach, transportation, marketing, retail recruitment, promotion and economic and residential development services above and beyond those provided by the City.

## **Location**

Approximately 36 blocks, an area defined in Section 4 of this plan. (See map on Exhibit 1).

## **Value of District**

The total estimated fair market value of the private properties within the proposed district as appraised by the Richland County Assessor as of September 2011 was \$403,212,282. As of September 2020, it was \$572,379,700, a 42% increase.

## **Improvements, Activities, Services**

### **Public Space Management**

#### **Enhanced Security Programs:**

- Downtown Ambassadors
- Security Patrols
- Courtesy Shuttle Service. Suspended due to the pandemic – expected to resume when safe.
- Visitor, Pedestrian, and Motorist Assistance
- Enhancements to street lighting and parking

#### **Enhanced Maintenance programs:**

- Enhanced cleaning and sanitizing of public spaces
- Graffiti Removal; Poster and Handbill Removal
- Sidewalk/Gutter Cleaning
- Sidewalk Pressure Washing
- Trash Removal
- Dog Waste Receptacles
- Collection of Cigarette Debris from special receptacles

### **Enhanced Landscape Programs**

- Tree Grate Maintenance
- Landscape Maintenance in Special Areas
- Plant and Maintain Flower Baskets, Flower Planters
- Sidewalk Weeding

### **Special Projects**

- Activation of current and creation of new public spaces.
- Additional Trash Cans and branding wraps
- Public Art Installation

### **Economic Development**

#### **Communication/Marketing**

- Funding and Distribution of Visitor Guides and MSD Maps
- Clean and Safe Promotions
- Public Relations, Marketing and Branding Services
- City Center Marketing Campaigns
- Street Banners and Holiday Decorations
- Improved Signage
- Support and Promote Events in the MSD

#### **Business Development**

- Business & Retail Recruitment & Retention
- Developer & Investor Recruitment
- Market Research & Data Collection
- Residential Recruitment & Demographics
- Encourage implementation of Commercial New Façade Improvement Program

#### **Quality of Life Development**

- Develop and support efforts for cultural, artistic, and healthy activities and events
- Enhance the district's capability and image to be a desirable place to work, live, and visit.

#### **Planning**

- Grant Writing
- Public/Private Planning Activities
- Work with city and other partners to improve connections to other districts

### **Method of Financing:**

A levy of assessments upon real property and buildings which benefit from the improvements and activities.

**Budget:**

Anticipated district budget contribution from private property assessment for the year 2021 of operation is \$1,038,000.

In addition to private property assessment, it is anticipated that public property owners (City, County, State and Federal) will contribute at least \$210,117 to the year 2021 operations budget.

It is also anticipated that non-profit property owners (Churches, Hospitals) will contribute at least \$75,000 to the year 2021 operations budget.

Anticipated miscellaneous revenue and grants will contribute \$1,000 to the year 2021 operations budget.

**Total Operations Budget year 2021: \$1,324,117**

**Cost:**

Annual assessments are based upon an allocation of specific program costs. Two property assessment variables, appraised value and street frontage on Main Street, are used in the calculation.

The annual yearly assessments are not expected to exceed the rates listed below during the full term of the BID unless specifically authorized by City Council.

Assessment Rate	
Per Dollar of Fair Market Value	\$ .001844
Per Foot of Property Frontage on Main Street	\$4.01
**Properties fronting Main Street are subject to both assessments.**	

**City Services:**

The City has agreed that existing City services will continue to be provided within the BID District at the same level as before the BID was created consistent with City services provided in other areas. BID services are in addition to existing City services.

**District Formation:**

A District may be formed by either of two processes.

1. Submission of signed petitions from property owners who represent a majority per capita of all owners of real property within the district, which is not exempt from ad valorem taxation.
2. The City may create an improvement district through an ordinance adopted by a majority of council after a public hearing at which the plan is presented, including the proposed basis and amount of assessment.

This plan anticipates that the City will form the district using Process No. 2, the same process used when the district was reauthorized in 2011.

**Duration:**

The Business Improvement District will have a 10-year life (January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2031). After nine years, a new implementation plan must be developed, and the approval process must be repeated in order to continue beyond the tenth year.

**Governance:**

The City of Columbia as the governing body must approve the 10-year implementation plan. City Center Improvement District budgets may be refined annually within the limitations set forth in the district implementation plan, by the board of the private sector management/implementation organization. Any changes to the implementation plan during the term of the district that are not within the limitations set forth for changes in the plan, must be approved by the City Council acting as the governing body.

Through a contract with the governing body (i.e. City of Columbia), a property owner-led, private sector, non-profit district management/implementation organization will implement the improvements and activities defined in the Plan and will manage the day-to-day operations of the District.

On a yearly basis a report summarizing the accomplishments of the District as well as a report of the financial activities of the District will be submitted to the governing body and to each assessment-paying property owner.

## **Section 4**

### **CITY CENTER IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT BOUNDARIES**

An approximate 36-block area has been identified for the City Center Improvement District. The map on Exhibit 1 of this report identifies district boundaries. These boundaries have remained consistent since the original formation of the BID in 2001.

#### **District Boundaries**

The District includes all properties within an area defined by the following boundaries:

The Western boundary is:

The western property line of property on the West side of Assembly Street from Elmwood Avenue to Gervais Street

The Northern boundary is:

The northern property line of property on the South side of Elmwood Avenue from Assembly Street to Marion Street

The Eastern boundary is:

The eastern property line of property on the East side of Marion Street from Elmwood Avenue to Gervais Street.

The Southern boundary is:

The southern property line of property on the North side Gervais Street from Assembly Street to Marion Street.

For a graphic representation of the boundaries of the City Center Improvement District see the map labeled “Exhibit 1.”



## **Section 5**

### **PROGRAMS AND SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED**

#### **Process to Establish the Improvement District Plan**

Through a series of focus group meetings and BID-Advisory Committee meetings of the City Center Partnership Long Range Planning Committee – all held virtually because of the ongoing pandemic -- and ongoing discussion with the Board of Directors, Downtown Columbia stakeholders collectively determined the priority for improvements and activities to be delivered by the City Center Improvement District. The primary needs as determined by the stakeholders were safety/security/cleanliness, maintenance, marketing/communications, homeless outreach, connectivity, economic development and retail recruitment.

All properties receive a core level of all the district’s services. In addition, Main Street receives a higher level of maintenance. The additional frontage assessment on Main Street reflects the increased level of services provided.

#### **What We Will Do!**

#### **PUBLIC SPACE DEVELOPMENT & MANAGEMENT**

The coronavirus pandemic has brought with it a greater demand for outdoor spaces and seating that has already reshaped public space, especially with many restaurants moving indoor dining outside. Moving forward, a greater emphasis will be needed on management of these spaces, especially those that use existing outdoor areas such as public sidewalks. Enhancing the safety and cleanliness of these areas will be a key goal of the City Center Partnership.

#### **Public Safety Program**

##### **City Center Public Safety Program**

The 36-block City Center security program mission is to support the police department, property owners and tenants in overall crime prevention efforts and reduction in street disorder, while offering a customer service orientation to pedestrians and motorists. It provides highly visible security and is intended to supplement -- not supplant -- individual building security and the Columbia Police Department.

##### **Integration with the Columbia Police Department**

The downtown public security program will work closely with The Columbia Police Department and integrate the Downtown Columbia program with that of the Department as an effective “force multiplier.”

##### **Bicycle/Segway Defender/Foot Patrol**

These patrols deter aggressive panhandling and other unsuitable street behavior. Their presence is a deterrent to theft and burglary from motor vehicles and has made an impact to reduce this cyclical

problem. They also deter and report illegal street vending, illegal dumping and code violations. They handle a myriad of quality of life problems, including drinking in public, urinating in public, indecent exposure, trespassing, aggressive panhandling, prostitution, and scavenging.

They perform goodwill gestures such as escorting employees and visitors to their vehicles or places of work, helping lost persons, changing flat tires, jumping dead batteries, and conducting tours. These patrols also assist with traffic control in the event of accidents, fires, or unusual occurrences.

They patrol assigned routes, covering all of the district. They are professional, assertive, friendly, courteous, people-oriented individuals in excellent physical condition. The bike patrol officers complete customized classroom district training and additional hours of field training.

#### **Evening Safety patrol**

The evening patrol has increased the sense of safety for downtown residents and the patrons of the restaurants, churches, hospital, hotels, and other businesses that cater to a nighttime clientele.

### **Maintenance Program**

**City Center Clean Team:** In order to deal effectively and consistently with maintenance issues a City Center Maintenance Plan has been established. A multi-dimensional approach has been developed consisting of the following elements:

**Sidewalk Maintenance:** Uniformed, radio-equipped personnel sweep litter, debris and refuse from sidewalks and gutters of the district. Personnel also collect trash and debris as necessary, including maintaining pet “comfort stations.”

**Graffiti Removal:** Removal of graffiti by using solvent and pressure washing. The District maintains a zero tolerance graffiti policy. All tags are removed within 24 hours once the team is notified of the presence of graffiti.

**Sidewalk Pressure Washing:** The district standard is to have all sidewalks cleaned as necessary to maintain a “just cleaned” appearance at all times.

**Paper Sign and Handbill Removal:** Paper signs and handbills taped or glued on public property, utility boxes, poles and telephones are removed by hand or when necessary by high-pressure hose.

**Special Collections:** A truck is available to collect items illegally dumped in the district.

**Maintenance Problems Requiring Third Party Intervention:** Problems that create blighted or unsafe conditions in the district, but are outside of the jurisdiction of the district to repair are monitored, and the responsible party is contacted and asked to deal with the issue. These types of problems include blocked or damaged sewers or drains, damaged sidewalks/streets/alleys, non-operating streetlights, damaged or missing street signs, etc.

### **Landscape Maintenance Program**

**Litter/Weed Removal:** Public landscape areas, tree wells and planters are maintained and kept free of litter and weeds.

**Seasonal Planting:** A program of seasonal plantings with colorful flowers has been developed and more than 201 planters and baskets are maintained.

### **Special Projects Program**

**Public Art:** A program has been developed to facilitate the installation of public art within the district. This includes permanent installations as well as seasonal projects, such as the popular seasonal yarn-bombing displays.

**Street Furniture:** Additional street furniture (chairs and tables), trashcans, and cigarette receptacles have been added and are serviced, as necessary.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Columbia's Main Street District needs to position itself for opportunities that may arise post pandemic.

### **Communications/Marketing**

Programs will continue to be developed that will tell the story of change and improvement in downtown Columbia. As the city recovers from the pandemic, communications and marketing will play a critical role in attracting people to return to a safe, clean and healthy downtown. The program includes:

- Street Banner Program
- LED Holiday Lights installed at major intersections along Main Street and Seasonal Decorations purchased
- The Visitor Guide distribution and MSD Maps
- Maintaining and updating the MSD Website

- Business directory on website
- Use of Social Media to promote the BID area including Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter
- Monthly Electronic Newsletters to more than 2,000 people and Printed Annual Report for stakeholders
- MSD Interest Tours
- Continue to Improve Wayfinding Signage Program

**Business Development**

New tools will be developed, and older tools revitalized coming out of the pandemic to support the efforts of individual property owners and brokers to attract and retain tenants. Some of these tools are:

- Defined Business and Retail Recruitment and Retention Strategy
- Investor, Tenant and Broker Recruitment Support Information
- Residential Recruitment and Demographics Development
- Work as a liaison with other city offices
- 

**Planning**

- Public/Private Planning Activities
- Parking Study
- Resource Sourcing
- Grant Writing

**ADMINISTRATION**

**Management Personnel**

A professional staff that requires centralized administrative support manages the City Center improvements and activities. Additionally, this staff serves as a liaison between property owners, businesses and public agencies. District services are delivered a minimum of 16 hours a day, seven days a week and require management staff 16 hours a day, seven days a week.

## Section 6 Operating Budget

### FY 2021 Operating Budget Summary

The summary of the FY 2021 operating budget for the City Center Improvement District is provided. The total improvement and activity plan budget for 2021 is projected at \$1,324,117 made up of the following components:

<b>PUBLIC SPACE MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>Budget Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,324,117</b>
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#### Public Clean and Safety Program

The budget for the public safety program is **\$538,062 or 40%** of the **total District budget**.

- **Enhanced Security Programs**

The public safety programs are designed to improve both the reality and the perception of safety in the City Center. Individual public safety programs are detailed in Section 5.

- **Enhanced Maintenance**

In order to establish and maintain cleanliness throughout the District the Maintenance program will remove graffiti, remove trash and debris, provide sidewalk maintenance, sidewalk pressure washing and other services as detailed in Section 5.

- **Enhanced Landscape Services**

To provide a more positive perception of the City Center an enhanced landscape program will be provided as detailed in Section 5.

- **Special Projects**

Special projects are projects that are important to increasing the quality of life in the public environment, but do not fit within one of the other categories. Special project details are found in Section 5.

#### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

In order to tell the story of downtown Columbia, and continue to build upon the positive changes in both perception and reality, we have developed a communications, marketing and economic development program as detailed in Section 5.

The budget for economic development programs is **\$516,405 or 39%** of the **total District budget**.

#### **ADMINISTRATION**

In order to manage the day-to-day activities of the BID a professional administrative staff and office is necessary to ensure the delivery of quality services. The budget for administration is **\$278,065 or 21%** of the **total District budget**.

## **Section 7**

### **ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY**

#### **Assessment Methodology**

Downtown Columbia property owners and business owners have emphasized that the assessment formula for the District must be fair, balanced and have a direct relationship between benefits received and costs.

#### **Calculation of Assessments**

The preceding methodology is applied to a database that has been constructed by the Downtown Columbia property owners and its consultant team. The process for compiling the property database includes the following steps:

1. Property data was first obtained from the County Assessor's Office
2. County Assessor property data was cross-checked with reliable private sector data sources
3. A site survey was undertaken to verify selective data.

Based upon the methodology as set forth above, property data compiled by the Downtown Columbia property owners and the District budget will yield the following assessments for each benefit zone.

The annual yearly assessments will not exceed the rates listed below during the first year of the BID.

Assessment Rate	
Per Dollar of Fair Market Value	\$.001844

Assessment Rate	
Per Foot Frontage on Main Street	\$4.01

In future years, assessments may change, up or down, if appraised value information changes. We do not anticipate any increases in the assessment rates unless unforeseen circumstances occur.

#### **Budget Adjustments**

If there is a budget surplus, it will be rolled into the following year's District budget. Yearly expenditures and budgets shall be set so that at the end of each year there will not be a planned deficit at the end of any year.

#### **Time and Manner for Collecting Assessments**

As provided by state law, the City Center BID assessment will appear as a separate line item on annual property tax bills.

#### **Government Assessments**

The City Center Improvement District plan assumes that the City, County and Federal Government will pay fair-share assessments for property owned within the boundaries of the District.

It is the intent of the improvement district law to provide services only to those properties that pay assessments. District services will not be provided to government properties that do not pay District assessments. All reasonable efforts will be made to include government properties on a voluntary basis in the District assessment.

**Residential Assessments**

Owner occupied residential property which is taxed under Section 12-43-220 (c) will not be assessed unless the owner gives the governing body written permission to include the property within the improvement district. Multi-unit residential property and non-owner occupied horizontal property regime units which are not taxed or will not be taxed pursuant to Section 12-43-220 (c) will be assessed.

**Non-profit Assessments**

Property held in a non-profit status that does not currently pay ad valorem taxes will not be required to pay District assessments by the City Center Partnership Board of Directors. All reasonable efforts will be made to include non-profit properties on a voluntary basis in the District assessment. The District budget assumes participation from some non-profit property owners.

## **Section 8**

### **GOVERNING THE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT**

#### **Private Sector, Management/Implementation Organization**

Through a contract with the governing body (i.e. City of Columbia), a property owner-led, private sector, non-profit district management/implementation organization will implement the improvements and activities defined in the Plan and will manage the day-to-day operations of the District. This group's professional management staff will handle communications and administration for the District.

The City of Columbia as the governing body, must approve the 10-year implementation plan. City Center Improvement District budgets and policies may be refined annually within the limitations set forth in the district implementation plan, by the board of the private sector management/implementation organization. During the term of the District, any changes to the implementation plan that are not within the limitations set forth for changes in the plan must be approved by the City Council.

On a yearly basis the management/implementation organization will issue a report summarizing the accomplishments of the district as well as a report of the financial activities of the district. The report will be submitted to the City Council as the governing body and to each assessment-paying property owner.



**Section 9**  
**CONTINUATION OF CITY SERVICES**

Throughout the process to establish the City Center Improvement District, business and property owners have voiced concerns that the City of Columbia maintain existing services at verifiable “baseline” service levels. A formal baseline level of service policy ensures that existing City services are enhanced and not replaced by new BID improvements and activities.

**Yrs: 2012-2021**  
**City Center Partnership, Inc.**  
**Business Improvement District Grid**

